

Power in the Name of Jesus

Acts 3:1-4:31

John Breon

We've seen that Pentecost power is sustained in the church's message and its practices of teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. But God doesn't give this great power just to sit in the church. The Holy Spirit moves us out into the world where there are people in need.

The power of Pentecost is unleashed through the name of Jesus. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (2:21). In chapters 3 and 4, we see the power of salvation and healing through the name of the Lord Jesus. We see an example of the "many wonders and signs performed by the apostles."

3:1-10—The Healing

3:6—Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

3:11-26—Peter Explains the Healing to the Gathered Crowd

Who's at work here? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our ancestors.

3:16—"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."

Who is this Jesus whose name has such power?

- God's servant
- the Holy and Righteous One
- the Author of Life
- killed, but God raised him from the dead
- Messiah
- Prophet

This is not magic or manipulation, but faith. Faith in the name of Jesus is faith in Jesus himself. His name is not some magic formula or incantation that's independent of his character and teaching and life. By the Holy Spirit, we have the gift of faith in the Lord Jesus himself. Faith is believing—believing that Jesus is all these things the apostles proclaimed and that he is able to do all the things he promises. Faith is trust and commitment. Faith is spiritual perception. Faith is openness to God, willing to receive.

4:1-12—Peter and John Are Arrested and Testify to the Ruling Council

4:10—"It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed."

4:12—"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved."

Salvation includes forgiveness, sins wiped out. It includes "times of refreshing from the Lord"—new life, freshness, vitality. The fullness of salvation will be when God restores everything (3:19-21).

4:13-22—Opposition to the Name

They took note that these men had been with Jesus. The apostles knew Jesus for themselves.

19:13-17—Seven sons of Sceva

-Class studying Australia; girl knew about it because she had lived there-

"We can't help but speak of all that we have seen and heard."

Text of my first sermon

4:23-31—Prayer for Boldness and God's Answer

4:29, 30—"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable you servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

The community moved from its time of prayer to a time of confrontation with the misery of the world in the form of a crippled man. Then, after arousing the ire of the authorities and testifying to the world and its rulers concerning the power of Christ, the community once again withdraws for prayer, seeking to be given in worship the power it needs to witness boldly to what is happening in the world. In this rhythm of action and speech, witness and worship, the church discovers the source of its life. (Will Willimon, *Acts: Interpretation*)

In the name of Jesus, there is power.

In the name of Jesus, there's power for salvation.

In the name of Jesus, there's power for healing.

In the name of Jesus, there's power to forgive.

In the name of Jesus, there's power to restore.

In the name of Jesus, there's power to sustain us whatever happens.

In the name of Jesus, there's power to be bold.

In the name of Jesus, there's power to witness.

In the name of Jesus, there's power to serve.

In the name of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit pours into our lives and pours through us into the world.

In the name of Jesus, God is glorified.